



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

July 27, 2005

News Release

IMMIGRATION SERVICE AGENCY AND ITS DIRECTOR INDICTED ON CHARGES OF FRAUDULENTLY SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS FOR EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION

MIAMI- R. Alexander Acosta, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, John Paletti, Acting Special Agent in Charge, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and Paul Blocker Jr., Chief Patrol Agent, Customs and Border Protection announced today the Indictment of defendants, The Haitian American Community Help Organization of South Florida, Inc ("HACHO") and the HACHO Executive Director Gomez Accime, on charges of conspiracy to commit mail fraud, mail fraud and presenting false applications for employment authorization. Accime was arrested today and will be making his initial appearance in court on July 28, 2005, before Magistrate Judge Ted Bandstra in Miami. If convicted, Accime faces a maximum term of imprisonment of five (5) years and a \$250,000 fine on the charge of conspiracy to commit mail fraud and a maximum term of imprisonment of twenty (20) years and a \$250,000 fine on each of the mail fraud charges.

HACHO represented to the general public that it could obtain employment authorization and other immigration benefits for aliens residing in the United States. According to the Indictment, HACHO submitted more than 10,000 fraudulent Form I-765, Applications for Employment Authorization, to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS) and for these acts, received in excess of \$3 million from the applicants.

To obtain employment authorizations, aliens must submit a Form I-765. Section 16 of this form requires an applicant to state his or her eligibility category. A person is eligible if among other things, he or she is a refugee, that is, if the applicant has a pending application for asylum in the United States, or is a personal or domestic servant of a non-immigrant employer. HACHO, however, submitted immigration Form I-765s without regard to the applicant's eligibility. HACHO falsely represented on the Form I-765 applications that the aliens submitting the applications were either refugees or employed as domestic or personal servants. The Citizenship and Immigration Services routinely denied these applications for lack of documentation verifying eligibility. HACHO nonetheless allegedly collected a \$450 fee from each applicant, although the Citizenship and Immigration Services had waived its one hundred and seventy-five dollar (\$175) filing fee for those applicants who were refugees.



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United States Attorney Acosta stated, "Submitting fraudulent documents for employment authorization swindles the unwitting immigrant of their money and their hopes for legal work status in the United States. It also corrupts our immigration system at a time when we must be most vigilant to ensure valid documentation supports all requests for status."

"Those who think that they can defraud the government unnoticed need to think twice," said John Paletti, acting special agent-in-charge of ICE in Miami. "DHS partner agencies here in South Florida are working closely with the U.S. Attorney's Office to ensure that organizations like HACHO are brought to justice."

Mr. Acosta commended the investigative efforts of ICE. This case is being handled by Assistant United States Attorney Jennifer Keene.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security, responsible for the enforcement of border, economic, infrastructure and transportation security laws. ICE seeks to prevent acts of terrorism by targeting the people, money and materials that support terrorist and criminal activities.